



NASA Procedural Requirements

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 (NASA Only)**Subject: NASA Performance Management System for the Senior Executive Service****Responsible Office: Office of Human Capital Management**[| TOC](#) | [Preface](#) | [Chapter1](#) | [Chapter2](#) | [Chapter3](#) | [Chapter4](#) | [AppendixA](#) | [AppendixB](#) | [ALL](#) |

Chapter 3: Performance Appraisal Process

3.1 Performance Planning and Appraisal Forms

Standard Agencywide SES performance planning and appraisal forms shall be used.

3.2 Performance Planning

3.2.1 The Rating Official shall establish, in consultation with the senior executive, a written performance plan at the beginning of the appraisal period. Normally, the plan shall be developed with and communicated to the senior executive within 30 days of the beginning of the appraisal period or within 30 days of the executive's assignment to a position.

3.2.2 A performance plan shall describe the Critical Elements of the senior executive's work and any other relevant performance elements.

3.2.3 At least 60 percent of the executive's performance plan shall focus on achieving measurable results and shall contain at least one Critical Element which:

- a. Reflects both individual and organizational performance expectations.
- b. Is aligned with an Agency strategic goal, objective, outcome, APG, and/or Agency-specific goal and/or external commitment within the senior executive's mission-related or functional area of responsibility.

3.2.4 A performance plan shall describe the expected results (performance expectations) and the level of performance expected (performance requirement) for fully successful performance against which the senior executive's performance will be appraised.

3.2.4.1 Performance expectations shall provide for:

- a. Alignment - They shall be derived from, and clearly linked to, an Agency strategic goal, objective, outcome, APG, and/or other Agency-specific goal and/or external commitment within the senior executive's mission-related or functional area of responsibility.
- b. Consultation - They shall be developed with the input and involvement of the senior executive and are communicated to him/her at the beginning of the applicable appraisal period, and/or at appropriate times thereafter.
- c. Results - They shall be applicable to the executive's respective areas of responsibility; reflect expected Agency and/or organizational outcomes and outputs, performance targets or metrics, policy/program objectives, and/or milestones; identify specific programmatic crosscutting, external, and partnership-oriented goals or objectives, as applicable; and be stated in terms of observable, measurable, and/or demonstrable performance.
- d. Balance - In addition to expected results, they shall include appropriate measures or indicators of employee and/or customer/stakeholder feedback; quality, quantity, timeliness, and cost effectiveness, as applicable; and those

technical, leadership, and/or managerial competencies or behaviors that contribute to and are necessary to distinguish outstanding performance.

3.2.4.2 Performance requirements:

- a. Shall support the achievement of an Agency strategic goal, objective, outcome, APG, and/or Agency-specific goal and/or external commitment within the senior executive's mission-related or functional area of responsibility.
- b. Shall be described in terms of clear, credible measures (e.g., quality, quantity, timeliness, and/or cost effectiveness) of performance.
- c. Shall be Specific, Measurable, Aggressive yet Achievable, Results-oriented, and Time-based (SMART).
- d. May be efficiency measures, programmatic metrics, institutional metrics, external metrics, and/or other metrics as appropriate.

3.2.5 If any generic performance requirement in NASA Form 1701, SES Performance Planning and Appraisal is not applicable to the senior executive's position, the Rating Official, in consultation with the senior executive, shall document such on the form. Additions and modifications may not be made to a generic performance element.

3.3 Monitoring Performance

3.3.1 The Rating Official shall monitor the senior executive's performance during the appraisal period.

3.3.2 A progress review may be initiated at any time by the Rating Official or the senior executive. However, at a minimum, the Rating Official shall conduct at least one progress review with the executive during the appraisal period.

3.3.3 Normally, the progress review shall be conducted within 30 days of March 31 (i.e., midpoint of the appraisal period). If at midpoint in the appraisal period a senior executive has been on a performance plan for less than 120 days, a midterm progress review may be conducted or delayed until such time in the appraisal period when a progress review would be more advantageous to the executive.

3.3.4 The primary purposes of a progress review are to:

- a. Discuss the senior executive's level of performance to date; provide feedback on his/her progress in accomplishing the performance expectations described in the performance plan; and provide, when necessary, advice and assistance on how to improve his/her performance.
- b. Identify and, if possible, resolve any issues or problems (e.g., resources) that may be an impediment to the achievement of the individual and/or organizational performance expectations identified in the performance plan.
- c. If necessary, revise the performance plan to reflect any new performance expectations or changes to existing performance expectations; changes shall be documented in the performance plan.

3.3.5 NASA Form 1701 shall be signed and dated by both the Rating Official and the senior executive to document the midterm progress review.

3.4 Appraising Performance

3.4.1 A senior executive shall be given an Annual Summary Rating at the end of the appraisal period (September 30). An Annual Summary Rating shall not be official/final until approved by the Administrator or designee.

3.4.2 When an Annual Summary Rating cannot be prepared as of September 30 because the senior executive has not served under a performance plan for the minimum appraisal period (120 days), the executive's appraisal period shall be extended to September 30 of the following year. Although the supervisor may determine a Performance Summary Rating any time after the executive has served 120 days under a performance plan, no performance based pay adjustments or other personnel actions may be effected based on this rating unless approved by the Administrator or designee.

3.4.3 At a minimum, a senior executive shall be appraised on the performance of the Critical Elements in his/her performance plan.

3.4.4 The appraisal of a senior executive shall be based on both individual and organizational performance, taking into account such factors as:

- a. Results achieved in accordance with an Agency strategic goal, objective, outcome, APG, and/or Agency-specific goal and/or external commitment within the senior executive's mission-related or functional area of responsibility. The results may be identified, for example, by the completion of the Program Assessment Rating Tool or the annual Performance and Accountability Report, and, when possible, shall be described in terms of clear, credible measures

of performance (e.g., quality, quantity, timeliness, and/or cost-effectiveness).

b. Customer satisfaction, to the extent applicable.

c. Employee perspectives.

d. Subordinate employees' performance ensuring that their performance:

(i) Expectations identify at least one Critical Element that is clearly traceable to an Agency strategic goal, objective, outcome, APG, and/or Agency-specific goal and/or external commitment and identified in the respective senior executive's performance plan.

(ii) Is appraised realistically against clear, measurable standards of performance.

(iii) Is appropriately recognized with performance awards that are commensurate with the level of performance, responsibility, and progress towards goals and objectives or corrective action taken to improve the employee's performance.

e. Meeting equal employment opportunity, diversity, and safety goals and complying with the merit system principles.

3.4.5 No specific mechanisms are prescribed for considering customer, employee, and other stakeholder perspectives. A Rating Official shall use, at his/her discretion, formal mechanisms such as surveys (e.g., Federal Human Capital Survey) or less formal mechanisms such as unsolicited customer and employee feedback and/or analysis of personnel data (e.g., employee turnover rates, diversity reports, employee grievances).

3.5 Rating Performance

3.5.1 The Rating Official shall assign and document on the NASA Form 1701 a performance element rating level for each element in the performance plan and a Performance Summary Rating level (i.e., Initial Summary Rating) of the senior executive's performance. In addition, the Rating Official shall prepare an overall performance assessment narrative that describes the specific achievements, results, and behaviors relating to both program/project/functional capabilities and management competencies that justify the Initial Summary Rating. The actual individual and organizational achievements during the appraisal period, the appraisal, and the Initial Summary Rating shall be discussed with the executive. However, it shall be communicated that no rating is final until approved by the Administrator or designee.

3.5.1.1 When an executive has worked across organizational lines or on programs that interface with more than one Center Director or Associate/Assistant Administrator (AA), EPMs will consult with other managers who are knowledgeable of the executive's performance and consider their input when recommending an Initial Summary Rating.

3.5.1.2 Center Directors will review and evaluate executives who lead Center functional offices with input from the counterpart Mission Support AA. The Mission Support AA shall provide a written evaluation of the principal Center functional lead (not to exceed one page), which shall be attached to the individual's Initial Summary Rating, and remain a part of the Annual Summary Rating. This evaluation shall address the elements in the performance plan.

3.5.1.3 The Chief, Safety and Mission Assurance (S&MA) formally assesses the S&MA functional leaders at the Centers and the S&MA managers for the Space Shuttle, International Space Station, and Constellation programs. The Rating Official shall attach this assessment to the individual's Initial Summary Rating as part of the Annual Summary Rating. This evaluation shall address the elements in the performance plan.

3.5.1.4 The program managers for Space Shuttle, International Space Station, and Constellation will be appraised by the appropriate Mission Director, with input by the Center Director.

3.5.1.5 Center Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) are rated by the Agency CFO, considering input by the Center Director. Center Directors shall provide a written evaluation of the Center CFO (not to exceed one page), which shall be attached to the individual's Initial Summary Rating, and remain a part of the Annual Summary Rating. This evaluation shall address the elements in the performance plan.

3.5.2 A senior executive may provide a written response within 10 days of receipt of an Initial Summary Rating and/or request a higher level review.

3.5.2.1 If the executive requests a higher level review, successive reviews shall be conducted by officials at the next higher level(s) (if any) within the management chain (generally the EPM).

3.5.2.2 The reviewing official may not change the Rating Official's Initial Summary Rating but may recommend a different rating to the PRB.

3.5.2.3 The reviewing official shall provide a copy of his/her findings and recommendations to the senior executive,

the Rating Official, the EPM, the next higher level of review, and/or the PRB.

3.5.3 The PRB shall review and evaluate the Initial Summary Rating and, if applicable, any senior executive's response and the comments and recommendation(s) from the reviewing official on the Initial Summary Rating, and conduct any further review needed to make its recommendation. A recommendation to the Administrator or designee about each senior executive's Annual Summary Rating shall be in writing. Prior to determining a rating recommendation, the PRB shall consider the following:

- a. The relevant program performance assessments as evidenced by the annual Performance and Accountability Report, the results from the completion of the Program Assessment Rating Tool, or findings/recommendations from other reviews and evaluations.
- b. For supervisory senior executives, the degree to which:
 - (i) Performance expectations of subordinate employees clearly link to the Agency's strategic goals or organizational, program, or policy objectives.
 - (ii) Employees' performance is fairly and consistently appraised based on individual and organizational performance results.
 - (iii) Employees' performance ratings and awards reflect meaningful performance distinctions commensurate with the level of individual performance, responsibility, and progress towards the achievement of the organization's goals and objectives.

3.5.4 The Administrator or designee shall determine the final Annual Summary Rating for each senior executive. In making this determination, the Administrator or designee shall consider the recommendation of the PRB and the overall performance of the organization. The senior executive shall be provided a copy of his/her Annual Summary Rating.

3.5.5 The Annual Summary Rating is the official rating and may not be appealed to the Merit Systems Protection Board or grieved under the NASA Grievance System, (NPR 3771.1).

3.6 Preparing for the Next Appraisal Period

3.6.1 During the appraisal discussion, the Rating Official and senior executive shall begin performance planning for the next appraisal period. Normally, a written performance plan shall be provided to the executive within 30 days after the beginning of the new appraisal period.

3.6.2 If input is required during the rating process under paragraph 4.5, the same officials shall be consulted when establishing performance objectives and requirements.

3.7 Details and Position Changes

3.7.1 The appraisal of a senior executive's performance and the assignment of an Initial Summary Rating at the end of an appraisal period is the responsibility of the Rating Official (i.e., supervisor of record) on that date.

3.7.2 When a senior executive is detailed or temporarily reassigned for 120 days or longer to another position during the appraisal period, the supervisor to whom the executive is detailed or temporarily assigned shall establish performance expectations for the executive and shall appraise the executive's performance in writing. This appraisal shall be considered by the Rating Official when assigning an Initial Summary Rating at the end of the appraisal period.

3.7.3 When a senior executive changes jobs or transfers to another agency after completing the minimum appraisal period, the Rating Official shall appraise the executive's performance in writing before the executive leaves. This appraisal shall be considered by the gaining supervisor of record when assigning an Initial Summary Rating at the end of the appraisal period.

3.8 Termination of Appraisal Period

An appraisal period may be terminated and a Performance Summary Rating assigned if a senior executive has served for at least the minimum appraisal period (120 days) under a performance plan provided that the Rating Official can determine that an adequate basis exists on which to appraise the executive's performance, and there is a need to do so. No pay adjustments or other personnel actions may be effected based on this rating unless approved by the Administrator or designee. An appraisal period for a career appointee [as defined in 5 U.S.C. 3132(a)(4)] cannot be terminated within 120 days after the beginning of a new Presidential administration.

3.9 Failure to Meet Performance Expectations

A supervisor should take appropriate action to address less than Fully Successful performance at any time during the appraisal period. When it is determined that a senior executive's performance is less than Fully Successful, the Rating Official shall develop a plan to assist the executive in improving his/her performance and shall evaluate the executive's performance before an appraisal period can be terminated. The plan may include, but is not limited to, formal training, on-the-job training, counseling, and closer supervision.

3.10 Using Performance Results

3.10.1 The results of performance appraisals and ratings shall be used as a basis for adjusting pay, granting awards, making other personnel decisions, and assessing a senior executive's development needs.

3.10.2 A senior executive with an Annual Summary Rating of Fully Successful or above is eligible to be considered for an SES Performance Award (bonus), an increase in pay, a Presidential Rank Award (after a minimum of three years of eligible service), and nonmonetary recognition. Non-career SES members are not eligible for bonuses or rank awards.

3.10.3 A senior executive with an Annual Summary Rating of less than Fully Successful may be considered for a reduction in pay.

3.10.4 A senior executive who receives an Annual Summary Rating of Unsatisfactory shall be reassigned or transferred to another SES position or removed from the SES.

3.10.5 A senior executive who receives two Unsatisfactory Annual Summary Ratings in any five-year period or two less than Fully Successful Annual Summary Ratings in any three-year period shall be removed from the SES.

3.10.6 A senior executive who is removed from the SES for performance and who is eligible under OPM regulations shall be entitled to placement in a position at GS-15 or above (or an equivalent position). An otherwise eligible executive removed from the SES for performance may elect discontinued service retirement rather than fall back to a GS-15 position.

| [TOC](#) | [Preface](#) | [Chapter1](#) | [Chapter2](#) | [Chapter3](#) | [Chapter4](#) | [AppendixA](#) | [AppendixB](#)
| [ALL](#) |

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